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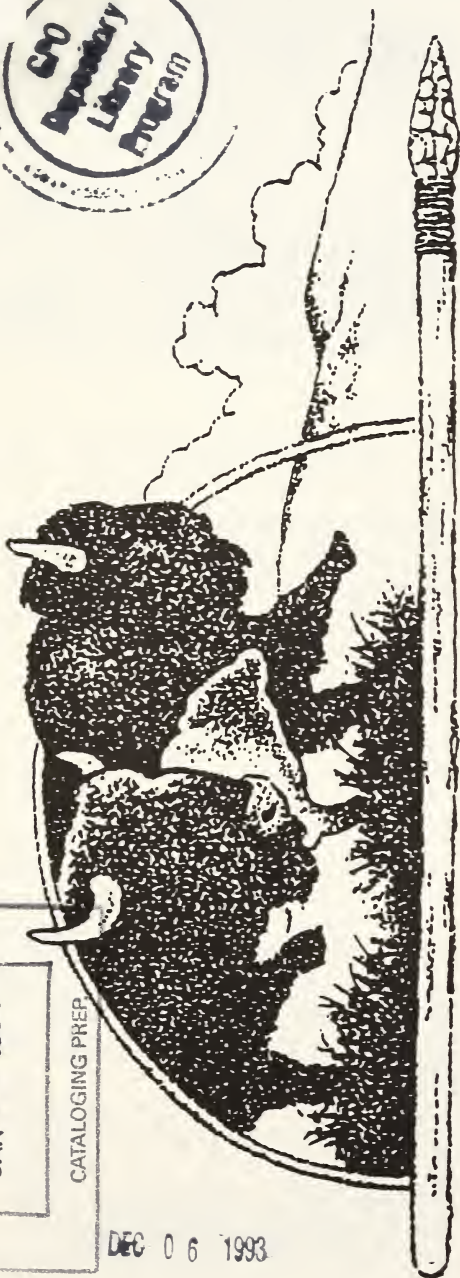


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# HUDSON KILL SITE

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## HUDSON-MENG BISON KILL SITE

About 10,000 years ago, a small band of nomadic hunters **WON THE PALEO-LOTTERY!** In an arroyo now located on the Oglala National Grassland in western Nebraska over 600 bison died and ensured the hunter's survival for another winter.

Did the hunters kill the bison by stampeding them over a cliff? Or did the bison die a natural death, possibly asphyxiated by a raging prairie fire? Or become trapped in drifting snow? Why did so many die at once? Where did the hunters camp as they processed their prize?

These are examples of the many intriguing questions archeologists and volunteers hope to answer as they continue to probe into the past during the planned excavations in the next decade.

## EXCAVATION HISTORY

The large bone concentration, remains of an extinct plains bison species, began to reveal its story in 1971. Dr. Larry Agenbroad, then

professor of Earth Science at Chadron State College directed systematic excavations between 1971 and 1977 which revealed a startling snapshot of prehistoric life on the Great Plains. Stone tools and projectile points found among the bones proved that humans were an important part of the picture that was beginning to materialize. The site remained undisturbed from 1977 until 1991, during which time it was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Excavation in 1991 revealed further evidence of human involvement, as well as evidence that carnivorous animals played a part in the way the bonebed looks today.

Bone preservation, which is excellent, and the possibility of a camp associated with the bonebed provide opportunities to ask, and hopefully answer, a wide range of research questions. During the ongoing "digs", archeologists and volunteers hope to uncover more information about the people and animals associated with the site and to investigate a variety of other questions as well, including:

How did the bison actually die?  
Where is the bonebed perimeter?  
Where did the hunters camp?  
How does the present climate differ from the prehistoric environment?  
How do the prehistoric **Bison** differ from the current species?

The Hudson-Meng Bison Kill Site contains the remains of more animals, and is larger than any other bonebed of this age in the Western Hemisphere. And because it is located on public land, it belongs to all Americans. The Nebraska National Forest manages the Oglala National Grassland for multiple uses and recognizes the importance of this unique resource.

### FUTURE PLANNING

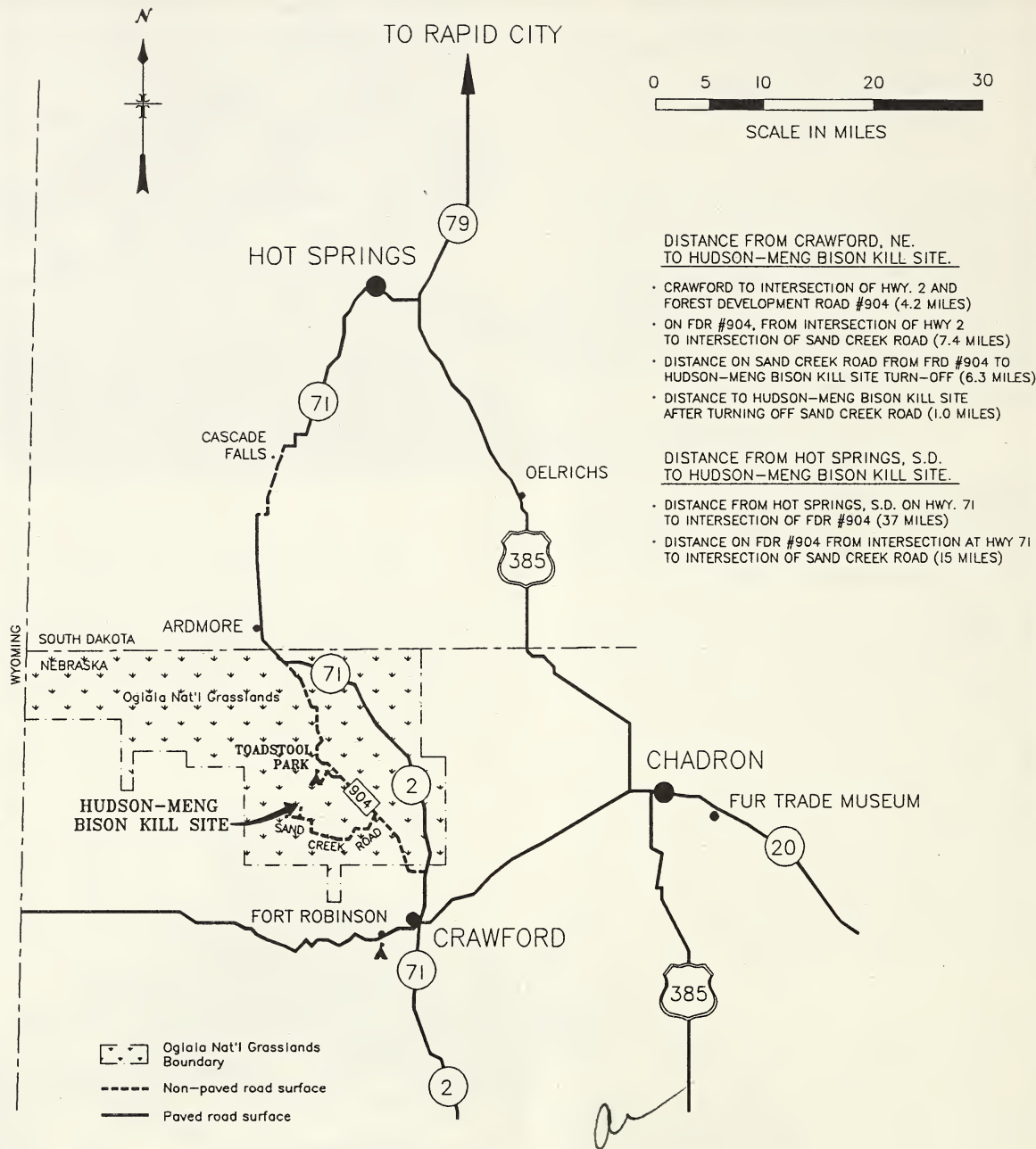
Planning is underway to build an interpretive and research center devoted to bringing archeology and the public together. Current plans call for an enclosure over the bonebed and an

interpretive center which will allow year-round excavation and study. Construction of these structures is planned to start in 1996/97. Archeologists will then be able to conduct research regardless of the weather while visitors to the Oglala National Grassland tour the facility and watch excavations in progress. Interpretive exhibits and guided tours will provide visitors with up-to-date information as the 10,000 year old drama continues to unfold.

Visitors are welcome to view the excavation during the field season each year and learn more about our predecessors on the plains. For information about excavation schedules contact the Nebraska National Forest, (308) 432-0300; Pine Ridge Ranger District, (308) 432-4475; or Trailside Museum, (308) 665-2730.











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Alberta Projectile Point found in the bonebed.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Excavation at the Hudson-Meng Site is a cooperative effort. Our partners include:

Colorado State University  
Chadron State College  
University of Wyoming  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Pine Ridge Job Corps

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